THE MYSTERY OF the ATOM!
SUICIDE SQUAD
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CAMPANEL
ISHERWOOD · KESEL '91

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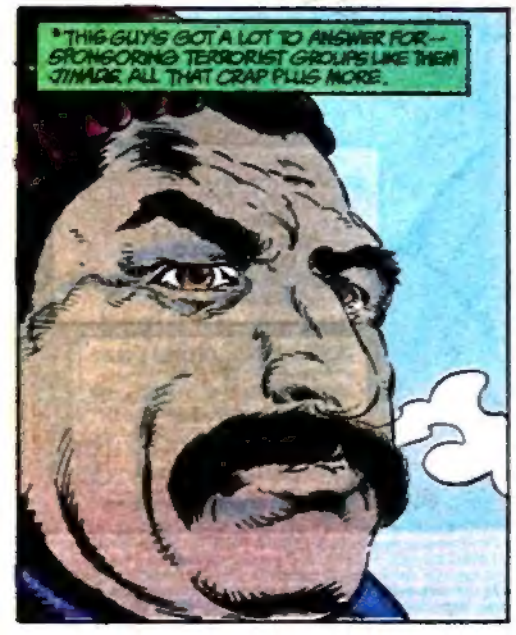
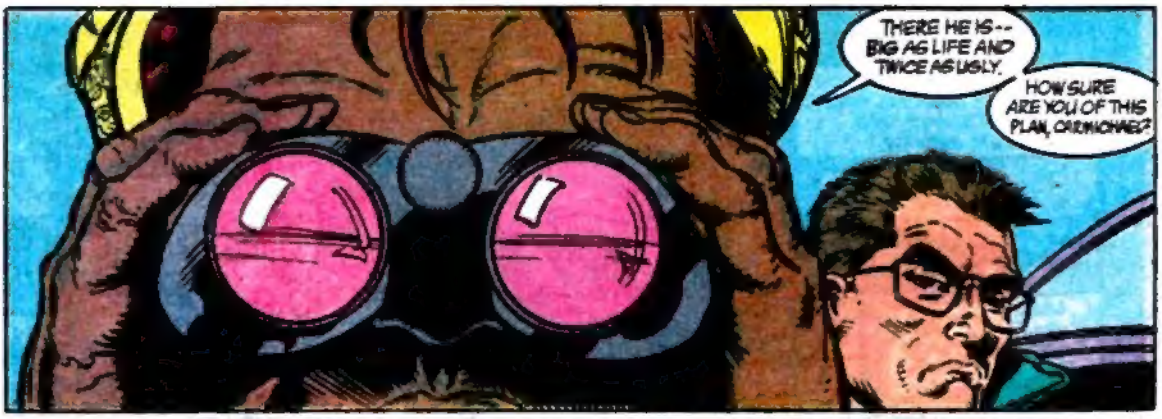
MP
WHERE'S HE GONNA GO? YOU GOT A NAVAL AIR STATION ACROSS THE BAY, A MAJOR SHIPYARD'S DOWN RIVER, ANNAPOLIS IS JUST UP RIVER, AND WASHINGTON'S ONLY ABOUT 100 MILES NORTHWEST AS THE CROW FLIES.

THIS RATHOLE IS CRAWLING WITH GUYS LIKE YOU AND ME, THE NAVY'S PATROLLING THE SHOW, THE AIR FORCE FLIES OVERHEAD...
HE'S SEALED IN TIGHTER THAN A DRUM. BELIEVE ME.

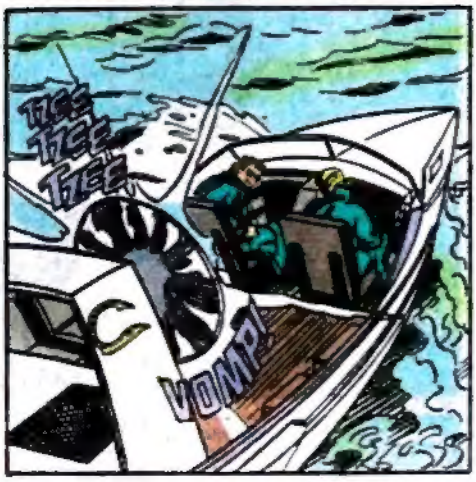
"WHAT ABOUT GRAPAC— HIS OWN COUNTRY?"
"THE PLACE IS BEING RUN BY ONE OF HIS LIEUTENANTS. YOU THINK THIS GUY WANTS MARLO BACK NOW HE'S GOT A TASTE OF POWER? THEY WON'T DO NOTHIN'. BELIEVE ME."


"THIS GUY'S GOT A LOT TO ANSWER FOR— SPONSORING TERRORIST GROUPS LIKE THEM ZITHARE, ALL THAT CRAP PLUS MORE.

"AIN'T NOBODY BREAKING MARLO OUT. BELIEVE ME-- HE'S GOING TO TRIAL AND HE'LL GET WHAT'S COMING TO HIM."
"WHAT IF THEY DON'T WANT TO BREAK HIM OUT? WHAT IF ALL THEY WANT IS TO KILL HIM?"


THERE HE IS-- BIG AS LIFE AND TWICE AS UGLY.
HOW SURE ARE YOU OF THIS PLAN, CARMICHAEL?

DEPENDS ON HOW GOOD THE DATA IS YOU GAVE ME. MY CHIPS ARE NO BETTER THAN ANY OTHER COMPUTER CHIPS THAT WAY-- YOU PUT JUNK IN, JUNK COMES OUT.
IF THE INFO'S GOOD, THEN THE PLAN'S SOUND WITHIN ITS PARAMETERS. BESIDES, YOU CAN'T COMPUTE EVERY VARIABLE. AND IF YOU DON'T GET ME TO LAND, I WON'T BE ABLE TO FUNCTION AT ALL!


TEEE TEEE TEEE
VOMP!

EVERYONE IN PLACE?
A FEW ARE STILL ARRIVING. THEY SHOULD BE HERE BY TOMORROW MORNING. I WARNED BOOMERANG TO BE ON TIME OR I'D COME LOOKING FOR HIM.

WHO KNOWS? HE MIGHT LIKE THAT.
LET'S PUT INTO SHORE. WE GOT A LOT TO DO AND THIS ONE IS GOING TO BE REAL TRICKY TO PULL OFF-- UNLESS YOU ALL WANT TO GO TO JAIL.

"ME, I'VE DONE TIME, AND ONCE WAS ENOUGH, THANK YOU. SO LET'S ALL TRY HARD TO MAKE THIS MISSION REAL SMOOTH."

GOTHAM CITY. THE WATERFRONT.

LUCKY SHAMROCK

MONTE WALSH! I WANT WORDS WITH YOU!

AH CHEEZ! DA BATMAN!

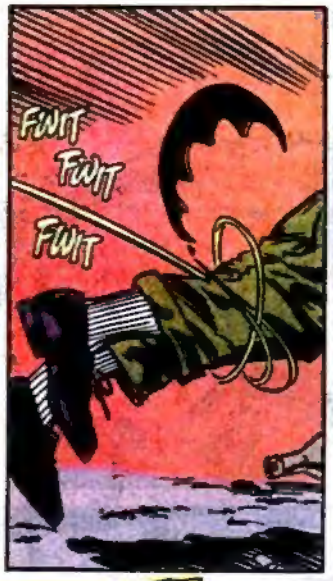
I AIN'T DONE NUTHIN'! I DON'T KNOW NUTHIN'!

BACK AWF! MONTE'S A LI'L SLUG, BUT HE'S ONE OF US. AND YOU GOT NO BIDNESS MESSIN' WID DA DOCKS!

GET YOUR HAND OFF.

KRUMO!
KRAK
TOK!
THOK!
NO PISTOLS! YOU KNOW HOW HE GETS WHEN YOU TRY TO USE A PISTOL. SWEAR TO HEAVEN-- THE FIRST GUY PULLS A GUN I'LL SHOOT DEAD!
CRUK!
WHUMP
I WANT WORDS WITH MONTE WALSH.
ANYONE ELSE WANT TO REGISTER AN OBJECTION?

LUCKY SHAMUS DELIVER


FWIT
FWIT
FWIT

HEY! YER STRETCHIN' THE MATERIAL!

KRASH!
OW!

AW, C'MAHN, BATS! YER NOT ANGRY, ARE YA?
YOU LEAVE WORD YOU HAVE INFORMATION FOR ME, MONTE, AND THEN YOU TRY TO GET MY CLOCK CLEANED. I DON'T LIKE BEING SET UP.

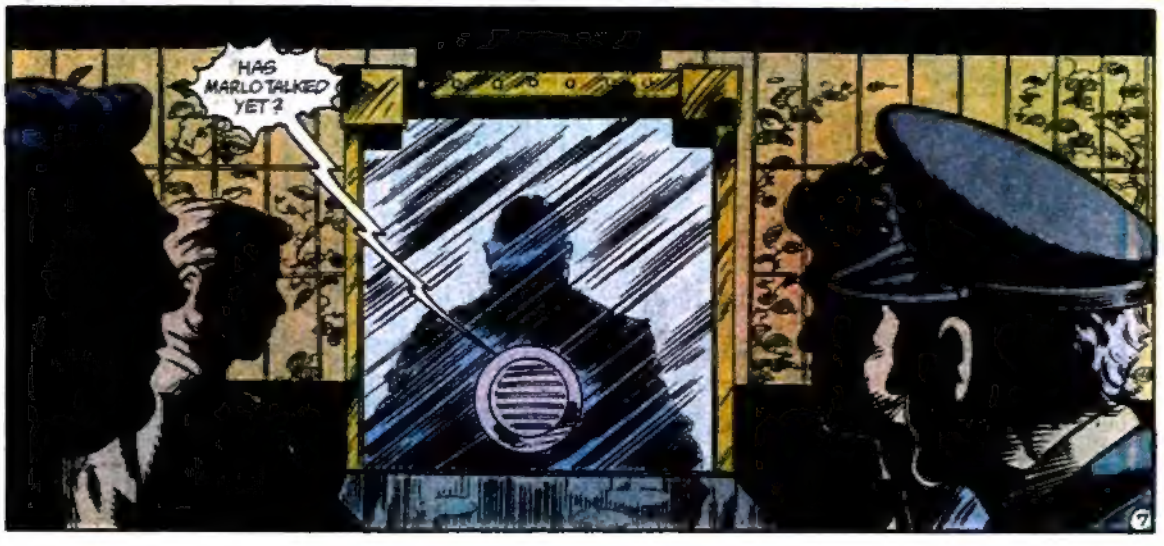
AHH, C'MAHN, BATS! JUST PROTECTIN' MYSELF A LI'L! YOU HIDE BEHIND THAT COWL--I HIDE BEHIND MY REP. SAME THING, AIN'T IT?
YOUR "REP" IS AS A GLIMY LITTLE SNITCH WHO'D SQUEAL ON HIS MOTHER IF THE PRICE WAS RIGHT.
I'M LOOKING FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE DEATH OF THE ATOM -- RAY PALMER. WHAT DO YOU HAVE?

WORD COMIN' DOWN FROM GOVAMINT CIRCLES. THE WALL KNEW ABOUT THE EXPLOSION THAT KILLED PALMER BEFORE IT HAPPENED.
"THE WALL"? YOU MEAN-- AMANDA WALLER?

YEAH. AMANDA WALLER. HEADS THE SUICIDE SQUAD. SHE'S BACK OUT OF JAIL, IN CASE YOU DIDN'T KNOW, AND WORD SAYS SHE AND HER PEOPLE ARE FREELANCE NOW.
I KNOW ALL ABOUT IT. AND YOU'RE SAYING SHE HAD A HAND IN RAY PALMER'S DEATH?

ALL I KNOW IS WHAT I HEAR. HEY! AIN'TCHA GONNA LET ME LOOSE?!
ASK YOUR FELLOW VERMIN TO NIBBLE YOU FREE.

I HAVE SOME PEOPLE TO SEE.


HAS MARLO TALKED YET?

NO, DIRECTOR. HE'S WAITING FOR US TO MAKE OUR DEAL.
MARLOS AN INGRATE. WE PROVIDED HIM WITH BASIC INFORMATION ON META-HUMAN RESEARCH. HE USES IT TO CREATE THIS JIHAD THAT LATER ATTACKS MANHATTAN!
CAN YOU IMAGINE HOW THE MEDIA WOULD TWIST THAT IF THEY GOT HOLD OF IT? THIS GOVERNMENT WOULD BE BLAMED FOR AN ATTACK ON ITS OWN PEOPLE!
THAT HAPPENED UNDER AN EARLIER ADMINISTRATION. IT FALLS TO THIS ONE TO MEND IT.
IN ANY CASE, THE EFFICACY OF THIS CABAL IS BASED ON NO ONE KNOWING OF OUR EXISTENCE. WE WILL FINISH WITH THIS AND THEN RESUME WORK ON THE CHESSMEN AGENDA.
METROPOLIS.
DAILY
COME ON, MR. SUPERHERO, TIME'S MONEY--AND THEY'RE NOT PAYING ME ENOUGH TO COOL MY HEELS UP HERE ALL AFTERNOON.
I'M RIGHT HERE.
HOLEE--!

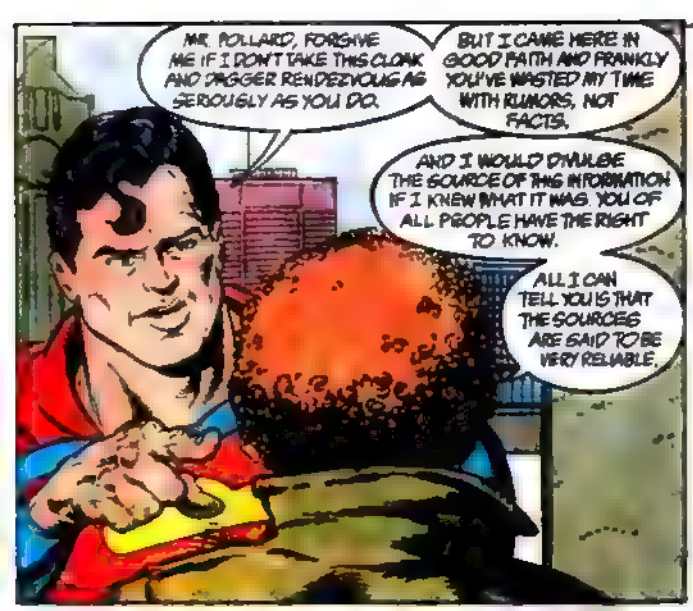
SUPERMAN!
YOU WON'T BE NEEDING THAT. IT WOULDN'T DO YOU MUCH GOOD ANYWAY.
PRIVATE ADMITTANCE ONLY

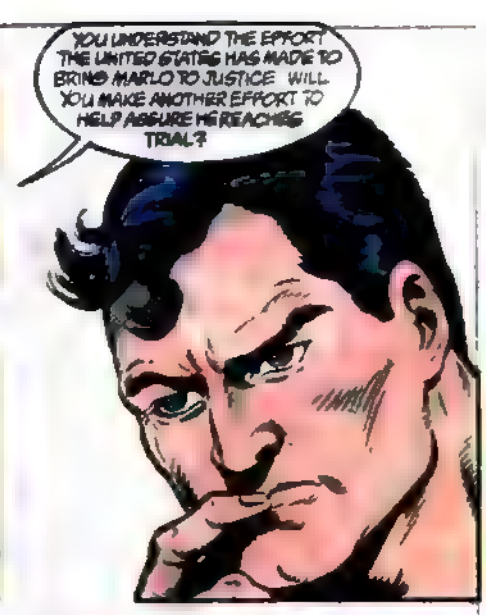
ER, SORRY ABOUT THAT. I WAS EXPECTING A GRAND AERIAL ENTRANCE.
SOMETIMES IT'S BETTER TO BE DISCREET. I TAKE IT YOU ARE--
POLLARD. CBI.

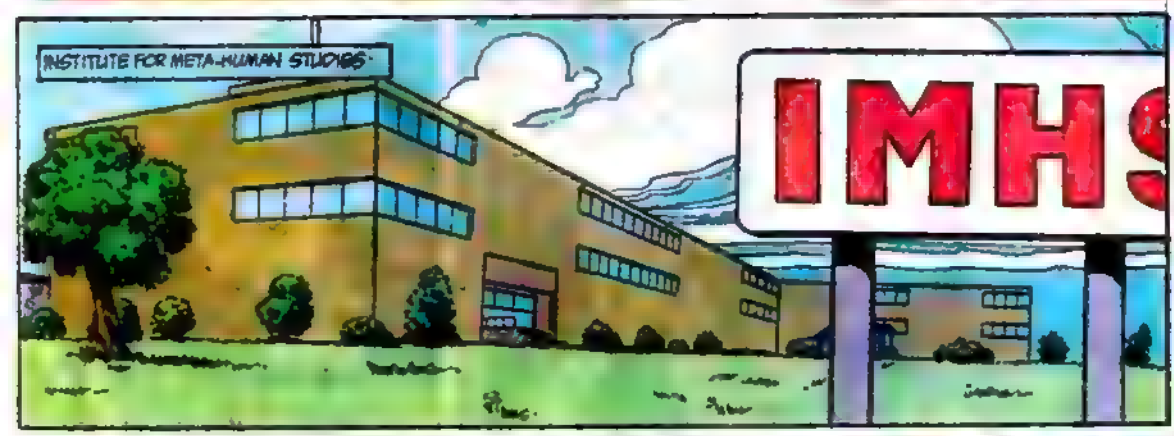
YOUR IDENTIFICATION CHECKS OUT.
HOW DID YOU--? OH, RIIIIGHT. X-RAY VISION.

THAT'S WHAT THEY CALL IT. THE MESSAGE FROM YOUR PEOPLE SAID YOU NEED MY HELP, BUT ON THE Q.T.
YES. IT CONCERNS FORMER PRESIDENT MARLO OF QURAC, WHOM YOU HELPED BRING TO THIS COUNTRY FOR TRIAL.

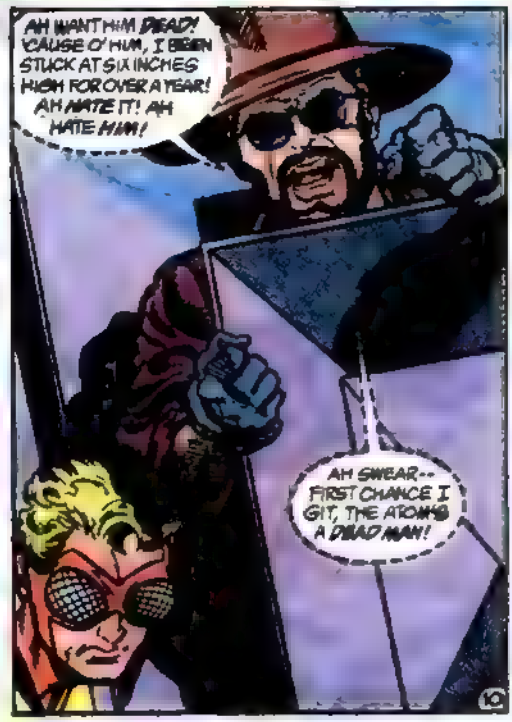
SOURCES SUGGEST THERE WILL BE AN ATTEMPT TO EITHER RESCUE--OR KILL--MARLO OVER THE NEXT 36 HOURS.
THE SOURCE SAYS THE ATTEMPT WILL BE MADE BY THE SUICIDE SQUAD.


MR. POLLARD, FORGIVE ME IF I DON'T TAKE THIS CLOAK AND DAGGER RENDEZVOUS AS SERIOUSLY AS YOU DO.
BUT I CAME HERE IN GOOD FAITH AND FRANKLY YOU'VE WASTED MY TIME WITH RUMORS, NOT FACTS.
AND I WOULD DIVULGE THE SOURCE OF THIS INFORMATION IF I KNEW WHAT IT WAS. YOU OF ALL PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO KNOW.
ALL I CAN TELL YOU IS THAT THE SOURCES ARE SAID TO BE VERY RELIABLE.


YOU UNDERSTAND THE EFFORT THE UNITED STATES HAS MADE TO BRING MARLO TO JUSTICE. WILL YOU MAKE ANOTHER EFFORT TO HELP ASSURE HE REACHES TRIAL?


INSTITUTE FOR META-HUMAN STUDIES
IMHS

THET'S PALMER. AH DON'T CARE WHUT THEY SAY—IT'S PALMER! IT'S GOTTA BE!
EASY, BLACKSNAKE! EVERYONE IN THE MICRO FORCE FEELS THE SAME WAY. WE HANDLE THIS BY THE NUMBERS AND WE ALL GET WHAT WE WANT!


AH WANT HIM DEAD! 'CAUSE O' HIM, I BEEN STUCK AT SIX INCHES HIGH FOR OVER A YEAR! AH HATE IT! AH HATE HIM!
AH SWEAR-- FIRST CHANCE I GIT, THE ATOMS A DEAD MAN!

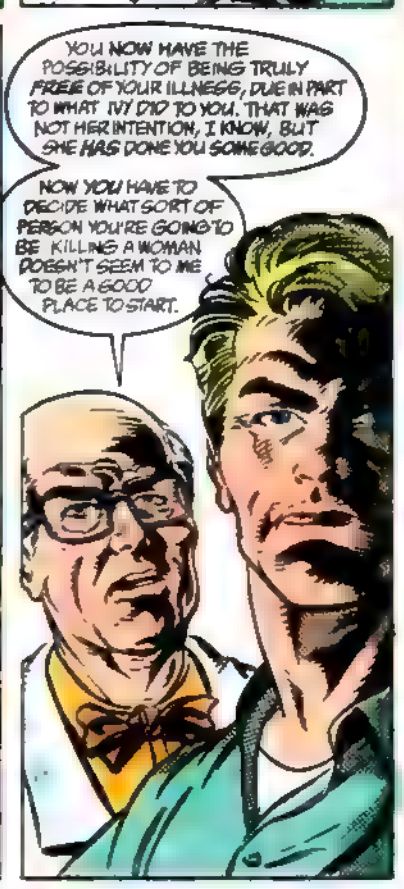
THE HOSPITAL WING OF IMMS
H34
H34
SHE'LL BE ALL RIGHT, COUNT VERTIGO. SHE WAS ABUSED QUITE A BIT ON THAT ISLAND BUT NOTHING WAS SERIOUS. SHE [illegible] AND AROUND IN A [illegible]D.
I THANK YOU FOR YOUR INFORMATION, DR. LAGRIEVE, BUT THAT WAS NOT MY CONCERN
H33
I WAS DEBATING WHETHER TO KILL HER NOW OR WAIT UNTIL SHE HAD A FIGHTING CHANCE.

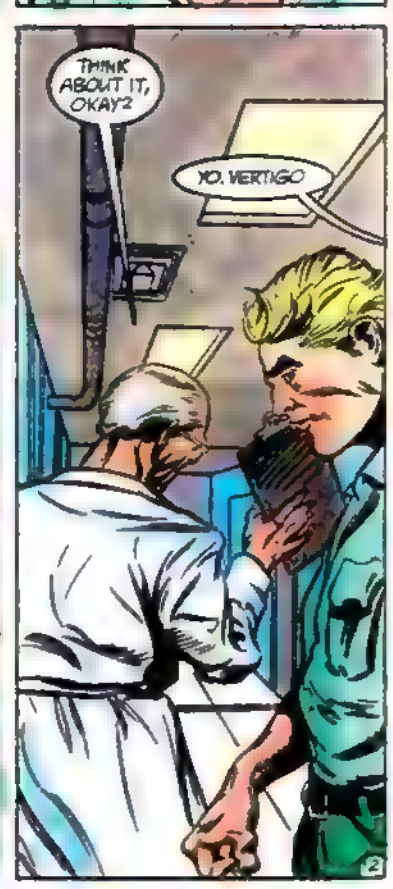
IT WON'T BE NOW, IN ANY CASE, BECAUSE I'M STANDING HERE AND I'M NOT ABOUT TO LET YOU.
BESIDES, THERE'S SOMETHING I THINK YOU SHOULD KNOW.

YOU ARE JUSTIFIABLY ANGRY WITH HER FOR THE WAY THAT SHE CONTROLLED YOUR WILL WITH HER POTIONS.
ESPECIALLY COMING AS IT DID UPON THE DRUGS THE SO-CALLED VLATAVAN FREEDOM FIGHTERS FED YOU TO BEND YOU TO THEIR WILL.
BUT THERE'S BEEN A CURIOUS SIDE EFFECT OF ALL THOSE DRUGS IN YOUR SYSTEM

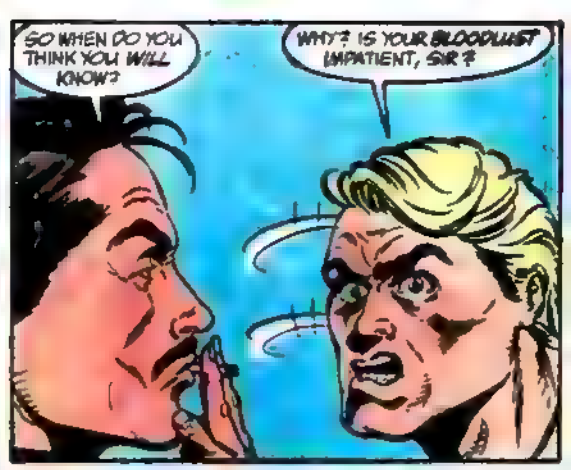
GIVEN YOUR META-HUMAN METABOLISM, THE HEAVY DOSAGES YOU RECEIVED BALANCED OUT THE CHEMICAL IMBALANCE IN YOUR BLOODSTREAM.
IN SHORT, THERE'S NO LONGER ANY MEDICAL REASON FOR YOUR MANIC-DEPRESSIVE STATE. IN THAT SENSE, YOU'VE BEEN CURED.

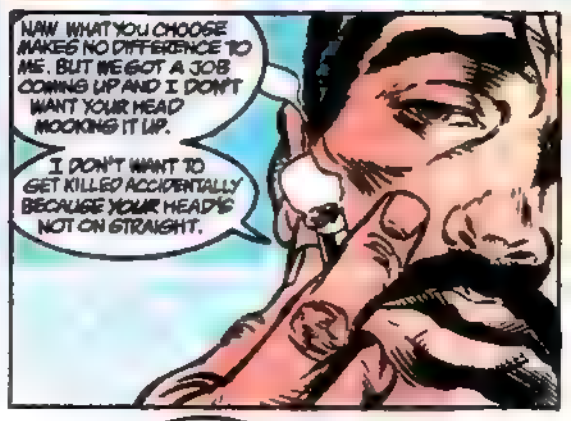
I DON'T BELIEVE THAT! EVEN NOW I FEEL MYSELF STRUGGLING WITH MY DISEASE...!
THE TESTS ARE CONCLUSIVE. HOWEVER, YOU STILL HAVE THE HABIT OF YOUR SICKNESS. YOU HAVE PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOR THAT YOU'VE LIVED WITH ALL YOUR LIFE—THAT HAVE, TO A LARGE DEGREE, MADE UP WHO YOU ARE


YOU NOW HAVE THE POSSIBILITY OF BEING TRULY FREE OF YOUR ILLNESS, DUE IN PART TO WHAT IVY DID TO YOU. THAT WAS NOT HER INTENTION, I KNOW, BUT SHE HAS DONE YOU SOME GOOD.
NOW YOU HAVE TO DECIDE WHAT SORT OF PERSON YOU'RE GOING TO BE. KILLING A WOMAN DOESN'T SEEM TO ME TO BE A GOOD PLACE TO START.


THINK ABOUT IT, OKAY?
YO, VERTIGO

SO, YOU MAKE UP YOUR MIND YET WHETHER YOU WANT ME TO SNUFF YOU OR NOT?
NO, I ... IT'S A DIFFICULT DECISION, AS I'M SURE YOU MUST APPRECIATE. I JUST RECEIVED SOME INFORMATION THAT CASTS EVERYTHING INTO A NEW LIGHT.


SO WHEN DO YOU THINK YOU WILL KNOW?
WHY? IS YOUR BLOODLUST IMPATIENT, SIR?

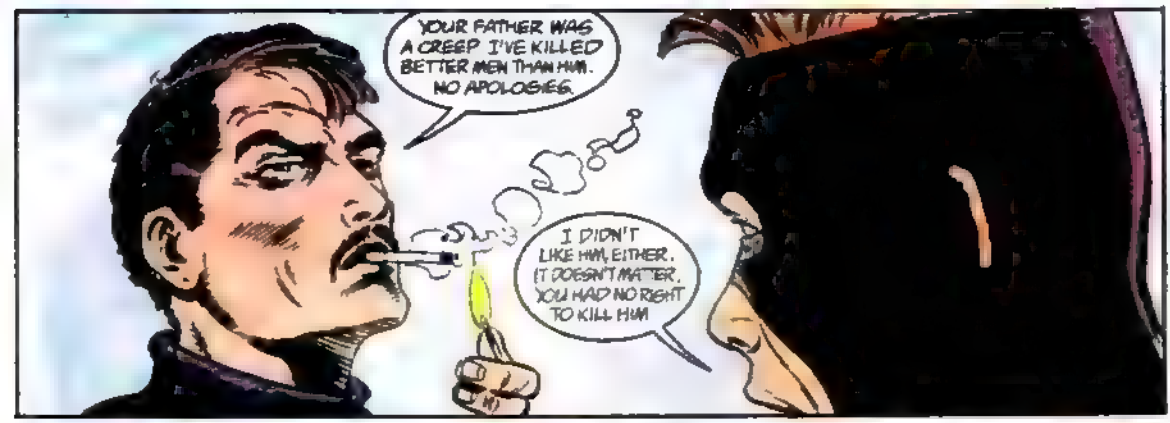

NAW. WHAT YOU CHOOSE MAKES NO DIFFERENCE TO ME. BUT WE GOT A JOB COMING UP AND I DON'T WANT YOUR HEAD MOCKING IT UP.
I DON'T WANT TO GET KILLED ACCIDENTALLY BECAUSE YOUR HEAD'S NOT ON STRAIGHT.

OF ALL THE UNMITIGATED GALL! YOUR OWN HEAD, SIR, IS A RAT'S NEST AND YOU HAVE THE EFFRONTERY TO IMPUGN MY MENTAL STATE?!
IT'S MY HEAD. IF IT GETS ME KILLED, OKAY. I JUST DON'T WANT YOUR HEAD PROBLEMS ACING ME.

H 31
I SHALL INFORM YOU WHEN I HAVE DETERMINED MY COURSE! GOOD DAY!
YOU'RE LAW'ON, RIGHT?

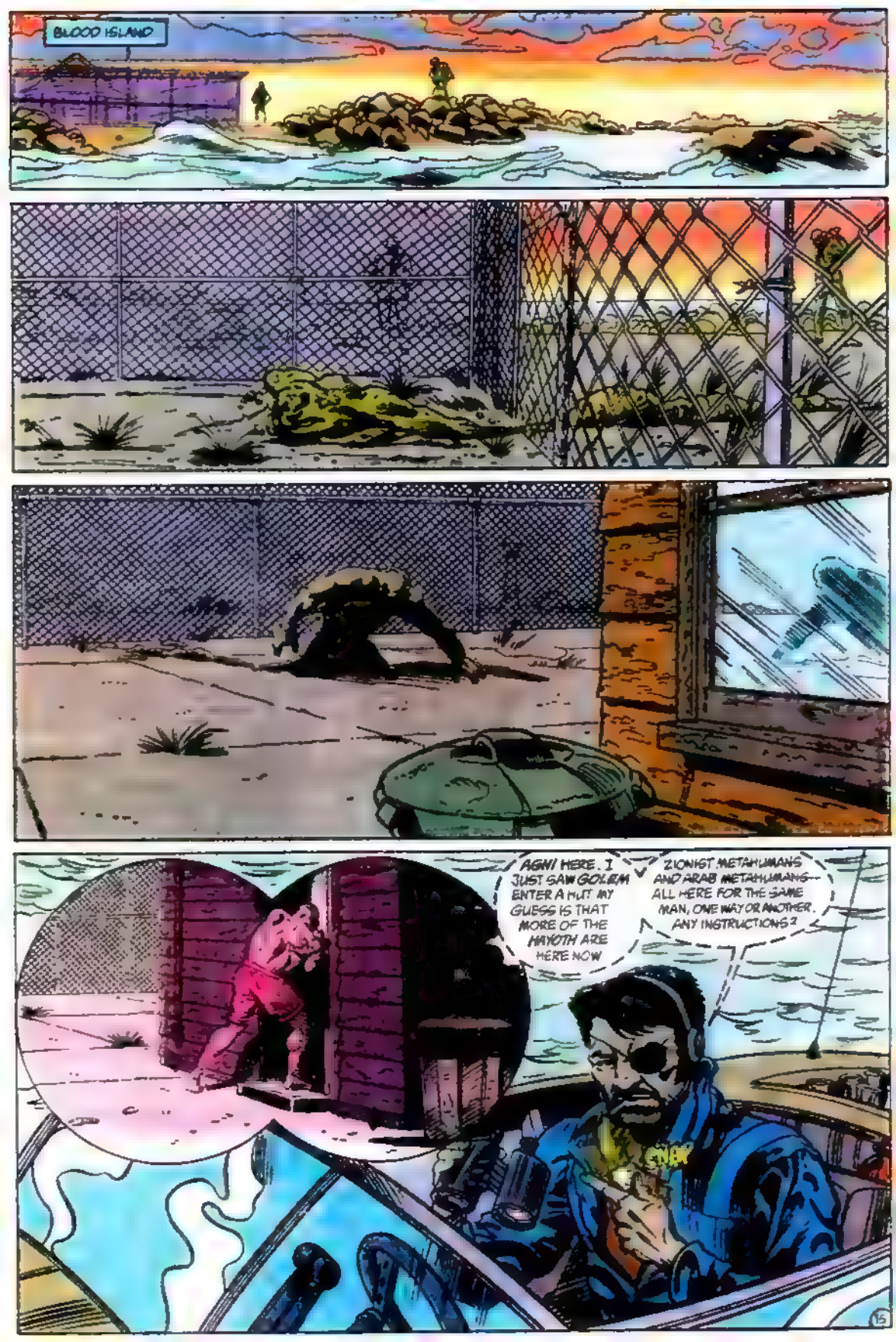
THAT'S RIGHT.
I'M ADAM CRAY YOU KILLED MY FATHER.

EVERYONE I'VE KILLED HAD A FATHER
MY FATHER WAS SENATOR CRAY.


YOUR FATHER WAS A CREEP. I'VE KILLED BETTER MEN THAN HIM. NO APOLOGIES.
I DIDN'T LIKE HIM, EITHER. IT DOESN'T MATTER. YOU HAD NO RIGHT TO KILL HIM

YOU OWE ME, LAWTON. ME AND MY FAMILY. YOU OWE MY DAD.
OKAY. WHEN YOU FIGURE OUT WHAT I OWE AND HOW YOU WANT TO COLLECT IT, YOU BILL ME.

I'LL GIVE YOU ONE FREE SHOT. MAKE IT COUNT. YOU WON'T GET A SECOND.
LET'S GET TO THE PLANE. THE WALL GETS TESTY IF YOU'RE LATE TO ONE OF HER LITTLE MEETINGS.


BLOOD ISLAND
AGNI HERE. I JUST SAW GOLEM ENTER A HUT. MY GUESS IS THAT MORE OF THE MAYOTH ARE HERE NOW.
ZIONIST METAHUMANS AND ARAB METAHUMANS— ALL HERE FOR THE SAME MAN, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER. ANY INSTRUCTIONS?
CLICK

WE WAIT. WE LET THEM MAKE THEIR MOVE. LET THE ISRAELIS DO THE HARD PART--THEN WE WILL TAKE MARLO FROM THEM OUT.
NOW, YOU'RE SURE, MY LAD, THAT YOU DON'T MIND MY BEING NAMED THE NEW HEAD OF THE CAPTAINS OF INDUSTRY?
ARE YOU KIDDING? LISTEN, MAJOR VICTORY--I KNOW I'M GOOD BUT I ALSO KNOW I'M NEW. I'M RELIEVED THAT SOMEONE WHO KNOWS THE ROPES IS RUNNING THE GROUP NOW!
BENEFIT FROM YOUR EXPERIENCE, GET SOME SEASONING!
HEH! WELL, I'M SURE I CAN LEARN A THING OR TWO FROM YOU, SON...
AH, LITTLE BOYS IN SPANDEX!
STOP IT, GIRL.
BARBARA
16

I'M NOT SURE WHO YOU THINK I AM, MR. BATMAN, BUT MY NAME IS AMY BEDDOES AND I'LL THANK YOU TO USE IT!
POINT TAKEN
MAY I SPEAK TO YOU PRIVATELY, MS. BEDDOES?
COMLAB2
MY BAT-CAVE IS DOWN THIS WAY. YOU MAY ENTER WITHOUT A BLINDFOLD.
PSILAB 3
ONE SECOND .. THERE. THAT SHOULD DISCOURAGE ANY WOULD-BE EAVES-DROPPERS.
IT STILL RANKLES YOU, DOESN'T IT--WHEN ROBIN OR I WOULD BLINDFOLD YOU BEFORE TAKING YOU TO THE BATCAVE
OF COURSE IT DOES.
IT WAS ALL RIGHT FOR YOU TO KNOW WHO I WAS BUT NOT FOR ME TO SHARE IN YOUR TRUST
WOULD IT HELP IF I TOOK OFF MY COWL NOW?

THAT'S OKAY

WHEN I REALLY WANT TO KNOW WHO YOU ARE, I'LL DIG IT UP. NOW, HOW CAN I HELP YOU?

I NEED TO TALK WITH WALLER

SHE AND THE SQUAD ARE OUT ON A MISSION

I KNOW THAT. I NEED TO KNOW WHERE

SO YOU SAY. I NEED TO KNOW WHY YOU NEED TO KNOW

I HAVE WORD THAT WALLER HAD A HAND IN THE EXPLOSION THAT KILLED RAY PALMER. I'M INVESTIGATING THAT EXPLOSION

IS THAT REASON ENOUGH?

I KNOW YOU. ODDS ARE YOU HAVE AN ALLEGATION FROM AN UNNAMED SOURCE. DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER VERIFICATION? ANY OTHER EVIDENCE?

THAT'S WHY I'M HERE

BATMAN, I'VE WORKED WITH WALLER. I'VE MET THE "NEW" ATOM -- WHO, BY THE WAY, HAS NOT CONVINCED ME HE ISN'T RAY PALMER -- AND I JUST DON'T BELIEVE WALLER WOULD DO WHAT YOU'RE SUGGESTING.

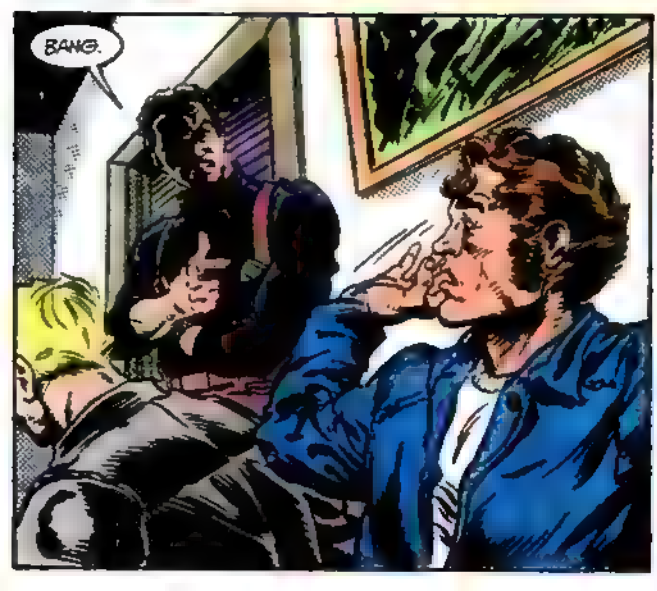
I DO. I'VE ALSO WORKED WITH HER.

I'VE HAD THE BODY IN PALMER'S GRAVE EXAMINED. THE BLAST DESTROYED HANDS AND FACE. BUT I DID A TISSUE SAMPLE AND HAD IT ANALYZED. IT SHOWS CELLULAR STRESS CONSISTENT WITH SIZE CHANGING NOW -- WILL YOU TELL ME WHERE WALLER IS?

FISHING CREEK, MARYLAND.
CRA
CLAW
MOTE
NO VACANCY

OKAY, THAT'S THE PLAN. YOU ALL KNOW WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE. ANY PERTINENT QUESTIONS?
YOU MEAN, OUTSIDE OF WHY WE'RE DOING THIS?

BECAUSE IT'S WHAT WE HIRED OUT TO DO. ANY OF YOU GOT ANY PERSONAL, MORAL OR EXISTENTIAL PROBLEMS, YOU WORK THEM OUT ON YOUR OWN. YOU GOT THIRTY MINUTES BEFORE WE START.
NOW GET OUT OF HERE AND GET WHERE YOU NEED TO GO.


BANG.

STUPID GALAH...!

OI! CRAY! HALF A SEC, EH?

YEAH?
CRAB CLAW MOTEL
LISTEN, I UNDERSTAND THERE'S HARD FEELINGS BETWEEN YOU AND LAWTON OVER HOW HE KILLED YER OLD MAN
SO?

LOOK, I DON'T BLAME YER AT ALL! I KNOW HOW I'D FEEL IF IT WAS MY OLD MAN
LAWTON'S A LOONIE, DEAD CERT MIGHT TAKE IT INTO HIS HEAD TO DO YOU NEXT. I MEAN, HE'S ALWAYS A LITTLE OFF HIS NUTTER, ISN'T HE?

IT'S LIKE THIS. HE HATES ME, TOO. BLAMES ME FOR HIS LUGGAGE GETTING LOST. CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?
THING IS--WELL... MISSIONS LIKE THESE, THEY'RE DANGEROUS. PEOPLE DON'T ALWAYS COME BACK FROM THEM, DO THEY?

WHAT'RE YOU SAYING?
I'M JUST SAYING IT MIGHT BE IN OUR MUTUAL SELF INTEREST TO MAKE SURE LAWTON DON'T COME BACK FROM THIS ONE

GOTHAM.

RIGHT ON TIME. BOTH OF YOU. THAT'S GOOD.
AS WE AGREED AT RAY PALMER'S FUNERAL. HAVE YOU LEARNED ANYTHING ABOUT WHO WAS BEHIND IT?

I'VE HAD REPORTS THAT AMANDA WALLER AND THE SUICIDE SQUAD MAY BE INVOLVED.

NEXT ISSUE: **DANGEROUS GAMES!** PART 2 OF LEGERDEMAIN!

SUICIDE NOTES

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Dear DC Dragons,

Amanda SHOT! Atom DOWN! Ben and Mark POISONED! Eve POSSESSED! Boomer and Thinker KIDNAPPED! Vertigo, Gort and Deadshot UNDER FIRE! Katana HOT on the trail! As far as cliffhangers go, this chapter wins the prize for the most in one issue of SUICIDE SQUAD! I don't think I can say I've ever enjoyed a plot getting more complicated than this one!

Red Shadows is a fascinating espionage team. Yerosha has a formidable psychic power, Schrek is chilling, Lamia is seductive, and Mrs. Gradenko is...well...Mrs. Gradenko, which, ironically, makes her the most interesting member of the group. One minute, she's a quiet, cuddly housewife. The next minute, she's not so cuddly anymore.

It looks like Eve is not only possessed by the Enchantress, but now she's under Schrek's power as well. Poor woman! I can't wait to see which witch has the stronger will.

Catseye is becoming more intriguing every time he pops up. Perhaps if he were "reconditioned," he might even make a good recruit for the SUICIDE SQUAD some day. I hope Ben and Mark pull out of this one okay. That final panel with Katana appearing in the doorway says it all. I can't wait till next issue!

Adam Cray is proving to be a great asset in undercover missions. The scene where he takes out the gunmen, alternately appearing and disappearing, was the best use of shrinking powers I've seen in the comics yet! Likewise, it's great to see Oracle making more and more appearances, and I was captivated by the mind-games Boomer and Carmichael were playing with each other. Their scene together was very tense and oddly enjoyable.

Holding my breath till next issue,

Neil Ahlquist
Minneapolis, MN

*****

Dear Dan,

A very entertaining issue. With so much going on, I don't see how you could fit Katana into the story! I can hardly wait for the conclusion, as I predicted.

One of the numerous items that keeps me reading this title is the excellent character portrayal. From a writing standpoint, this is an important part of a story, and John and Kim pull it off superbly. Being that it is such a difficult task with a cast so large, I would love to see these two handle a JUSTICE LEAGUE script someday.

It's too bad Ravan isn't still alive. I would have liked to see his reaction to Catseye. By the way, is it too much to ask if Speedy will ever make a return appearance?

Choom off,
Sir Jon Johnson
64 Indian Hill Avenue
Portland, CT 06480

Nooh, it's not too much to ask, Jon. But I'm afraid it is too much to expect. There's going to be so much going on in the next storyline, there won't be enough room for adverbs, much less Speedy.

But I'll put the word through to John and Kim.

*****

Dear Squad Scribes,

"The Dragon's Hoard" is looking excellent. I might be enjoying this one more than the "Chaos Serpent" back in #45-47, and that is quite a compliment. The art of Isherwood and Campanella was really sharp; their action sequences from pages 11-13 are a good example of the melding of these two fine artists. Their depiction of Schrek was chilling, and being a big Steel Wolf fan, I loved the first panel of page 16.

The characterization in this book is one of its most endearing qualities; these people are not static, unchanging cardboard cutouts. Characters like Vertigo, Lawton, and the Wall are human, with human vicissitudes in their lives. You might think you know what to expect from these people, but John Ostrander and Kim Yale throw plenty of curves, some subtle (like Vertigo's slow transformation into something akin to a hero), or not so subtle (Floyd Lawton's psychic "jailbreak" from his Deadshot personality in issue #51). There exists no other comic book for me that has a cast like this one's; I care about these characters; I root for them. You don't affect a reader so deeply with shabby writing; you do so with care and precision.

On a less emotional note: if the Wall goes (and it seems as if she might) I wouldn't mind seeing Nemesis step in, aided and abetted by Barbara Gordon, of course. If the Wall is killed, or steps down, it would be like the end of an era. Very strange indeed, to buy an issue and know the Wall won't be running the show. Elsewhere: Mrs. Gradenko is one tough grandmother; I like her. And finally, KEEP GORT! He's the baddest Russian since Ivan Draggov. Thanks for your hard work.

Sincerely,
Scott R. Pyle
502 Giffin Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15210

*****

Dear Dan,

Some coincidence. Amanda Waller and Maxwell Lord both shot and both languishing in a life-or-death situation. Well, coincidence or not, Amanda's run of good luck and good health had to run out, considering the many enemies she's made over the years. While I don't expect Amanda to die from this shooting, this book holds no guarantees for any cast member, so Amanda's demise still lies within the realm of possibility. It wouldn't surprise me if The Wall remains out of action for a while and Amy/Barbara/Batgirl/Oracle takes command.

SUICIDE SQUAD #55 showed The Dragon's Hoard mission is falling apart at the seams. I suspect that Katana will play a major role in turning the tide, and Atom and Oracle could come to the rescue besides. Incidentally, I like the Atom/Oracle "team." He can physically get to the places that Oracle can't, yet Oracle can remain in constant communication. And she seems to be one up on Cray when it comes to intelligence. A nice, effective combo.

It is so good to see Nightshade back in action, even though she was defeated. I hope that either she returns to the Squad full-time, or gets a featured part in some other DC series. Her reaction to the upcoming changes in Captain Atom's book should also merit some visible attention.

Sincerely,
Jim Kelly
29 West Melrose Street
Valley Stream, NY 11580-4503

*****

Dear John, Kim and crew:

Is it my imagination or does it seem like the Squad is running headfirst into self-destruction? The Squad has changed just a little too much in the year that Amanda was in prison. There is no control in the group. Each member would kill the other in an instant. The only ones who seem even able to work with the group are Deadshot and Nightshade. Too many of the members are going "normal" and losing their costumed personne like Deadshot did. I cannot refer to Deadshot as Lawton. He will always be Deadshot to me. I liked the costumes the characters wore. Granted, they can't always wear them, but at least have them don the costumes every so often. That's part of the appeal of super-heroes and villains. I just don't think this book will last too long if it continues in the direction it is heading.

I still don't believe Ray Palmer is dead. If he is, then I will have another thing to be mad at John about. In case you haven't heard from one of my other letters, John, I'm still mad at you for what you've done to Firestorm and his cast. I fully expect you to kill off Cliff any time now. If you happen to be at the San Diego Comic Con on June 6, look me up, or I'll look you up and maybe we could talk about Firestorm and give you a chance to calm my anger.

Jeffrey A. DeWitt
903 College Avenue
Redlands, CA 92374

Jeffrey, I hope last issue's "War of the Gods" crossover satisfied your cravings for costumed heroes and villains as well as the old FIRESTORM cast (most notably Firehawk). While there are no plans to kill off Cliff Carmichael (The New Thinker), I think it's important you understand that John isn't exclusively to blame for the direction SUICIDE SQUAD has taken. I'd appreciate it if you all felt free to put the blame squarely on the shoulders of Kim as well.

But seriously, folks...

*****

Dear Suicide Folk,

Adam Cray, Ray Palmer, or even Al Pratt...who is this new Atom? WHO CARES? The guy is good in a fight. I like him. End of discussion.

See ya in about 2,592,000 seconds.

Don Cromie
12911 Southern Avenue
Garfield Heights, OH 44125

Hey, Don, this latest Mighty Mite is one of my favorite new characters, too. And I'm sure you'll all feel the same way about him after this current storyline.

*****

Dear Dan,

Well, once again I honestly believe that the SUICIDE SQUAD is the greatest book in all of comicdom. Look at SQUAD #56. Is the art not grade A+? Are the characters not consistent without being stagnant?

Oracle thinks she's running the Squad, at least the members she can find, as I expected. Waller still lives, as I expected. Katana finally gets to business. Not only does she kill most of the people in the room, she also tells Manhunter and Bronze Tiger that they owe her. I wouldn't have disagreed with her and I would have bowed deeply. Hell, she even left two for our two macho guys to hit. (Nice touch.) I get the feeling Nightshade isn't being controlled as much as the Red Shadows believe. Remember her with the Succubus thing. Also, if she loses control, where's the Enchantress? The New Atom (See? I didn't call him Faxman!) claims to have talked to the old Atom? What gives? This sounds X-Men-ish (highly unlikely or improbable).

Next issue all hell breaks loose, right? By the way, Nightshade and Katana shouldn't be in the same issue of a book read by desperate males such as myself. (If I didn't use a word processing program I'd be drooling on the letter; as it is, the keyboard might not make it.) I strongly suggest you have her guest-star more often. She fits in well. I have a feeling...like maybe this mission might not work out so well. It's been going too well for the Squad. They actually did well for the last few missions.

G.M.
New Rochelle, NY

P.S. Watch the shadows. You never know when I'll be waiting.

Waiting in the shadows, and drooling. I can't imagine why you don't print your full name, G.M. But thanks for writing anyway.

*****

Dear Dan,

I don't mind if you bushwhack Amanda. I don't mind if you put the Atom out of action. I don't even mind if you have the Bronze Tiger and Manhunter poisoned; however, when you have Nightshade become an unwitting blood donor, you've gone too far! Nightshade has always been and will always be my favorite Squad member. Not only is she as beautiful as a Nagel painting, but she also has useful talents, abilities, and a conscience—qualities that make her more than useful to the Squad. Considering her mystical background and powers, I guess I shouldn't be so worried. If anything, I believe Schrek (Russian for vampire?) has bitten off more than he can handle. I hope Eve gets even with the bloodsucker and Zastrow in the end of the "Dragon's Hoard" storyline.

By the way, is it just a coincidence that both Maxwell Lord and Amanda Waller are experiencing similar problems? Perhaps if they both survive, they should get together and compare their "life after death" experiences. I would also like to know if there is any chance that Efreet (formerly Mindboggler) will ever show up in this book again. She would be another great asset to the team. Oracle should be given the opportunity to reprogram her and finally make use of her/its potential. Just imagine the Squad having a member like Dybbuk...the possibilities are endless.

Robert Hemedes
606 Alavarado Avenue, Apt. #111
Davis, CA 95616

P.S. Is Nightshade Catholic?

Well, Robert, "schrek" is not Russian, but German for "fear"; it's coincidence that Max and Amanda are being hospitalized at the same time, there are (still) no immediate plans for Mindboggler/Efreet; and yes, Nightshade is Catholic.

Next?

The Airtight Next Issue Box

SUICIDE SQUAD #60 continues our "Legerdemain" arc and follows our three big guest stars as they continue to track down the elusive Amanda Waller. The Mystery of the Atom deepens, plus old friends and enemies galore, and more action than you can fit into 22 pages. Honestly, now, this was only going to be a three-parter, but with so many "big guns" going off, we stretched it to four!

So check out the cover, and I'll see you soon!

—Dan Raspler
Awkward, and proud of it

NEXT ISSUE